

THE
NEW TOM THUMB;
WITH
AN ACCOUNT OF
HIS
WONDERFUL EXPLOITS
AS RELATED
BY MARGERY MEANWELL.

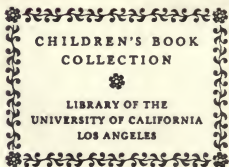
Illustrated with Descriptive Engravings.



LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. HARRIS,
CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S.

1818.

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PREFACE.

WHEN I wrote the Academy for Youth, I promised that I would write a little book for Children, and the life of the NEW TOM THUMB is the result of my promise.

Before you instruct children, it is necessary to interest their curiosity. This has been my object. All the incidents are those which are most familiar and pleasing to children.

The little hero is thrown into difficult situations, and left to extricate himself by his own ingenuity. This is the most important lesson that can be taught youth. The habit of reflection, or of self-command which distinguishes the

PREFACE.

wise and the good, from the foolish and imprudent, cannot be too early inculcated on the young mind. —

Whatever is put into the hands of children should be clear, precise, and adapted to their capacities; to this I have paid particular attention, It is not so much the business of tuition to teach children knowledge, as to improve their capacities for receiving it, and this can only be effected by impressing on their minds the habit of clear and precise comprehension.

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THE NEW TOM THUMB.

CHAPTER I.

MARGERY MEANWELL was the name of the old woman, whose hen Master Standfast* killed by throwing a stone at it. It was her custom, on a fine summer evening to collect around her a number of the children of the village, and relate to them little stories. One delightful evening when several of the young people of the aca-

* See the Academy.



demy were present, she related the Adventures of the New Tom Thumb. The Sun beamed upon the sides of the mountains, the cattle were slowly moving homeward, while the peasants were leaving the fields and returning to the village. Margery's two hens were on the green ; her cat sat by her side ; the children rested upon the

grass, while the young people stood round in a circle. Margery after telling them that the New Tom 'Thumb was a descendant of the Tom Thumb, of whom they had all heard, she thus began her story.

CHAPTER II.



TOM had a little sword, and he would often strike at flies, and even pierce them through the body. This was a cruel practice, and very unworthy of a boy, who should be humane to all animals. "What would you say," enquired his mother of him, "were a man to wound you?" "I would call him cruel," replied Tom. "You are no less cruel,"

said his mother, "for the lesser animals, like yourself, feel pain." Tom mused for a short time, he thought the practice wrong, and he almost resolved to refrain from it.

Tom, after this conversation, went into the garden to amuse himself. On his entrance, he saw a butterfly skimming over the flowers. "How beautiful it is," he cried, and instantly he resolved to catch it. His eye pursued its flight, and he remained motionless till it alighted upon a rose. He ran up to the spot, but the flower rose above, as does a tall oak above the head of a man. He looked up, and saw the beautiful insect; it sat still, and

looking down, seemed to mock his little figure. "I will bring you down," he exclaimed. Saying this, he made a blow at it with his sword,



but he could not reach the head of the rose. Tom was disappointed and angry. It is very foolish to be

angry; for one who acts from passion, besides losing what he desires, often does harm to himself. Observe Tom's conduct. He again took up his sword, and with one blow cut through the stem of the rose; it fell upon him, and the mighty little man sunk to the ground, while the butterfly flew away.

Tom arose, and disregarding the disaster, pursued the butterfly to a bed of flowers on which it alighted. He crept beneath them, and when he had advanced some way, he gently pushed up his head. The butterfly was near him, he took his sword and with a dexterous blow

struck off one of its wings. The poor insect fluttered about; Tom caught it, but while he was holding it, the other wing came away, and it fell to the ground. What a cruel boy! the butterfly that should have been flying over the fields, and enjoying the sunny day, lay writhing with pain. Tom was displeased with himself, with pity he viewed it on the grass, and he resolved never to be again guilty of such conduct.

Tom, however, soon forgot his good resolution. As he lay on the ground, his head shaded by a tuft of grass, a bee came and rested on a daisy beside him. It was industriously collecting honey to lay up for

winter; and what good boy would have harmed it. A bad habit is not easily conquered. Tom whipt out his sword, and with one blow stunned the bee, which fell humming at his feet. He sprang up, and seizing a wing with each hand, he



lifted it from the ground. Observe how he was punished. While he was

holding it by the wings, it writhed about and stung his hand. He let go his hold; the bee flew away, and the courageous little man ran dancing about, shaking his hand, and crying with pain. From this time he resolved never to catch bees.



THE NEW TOM THUMB. A STORY OF THE
 ADVENTURES OF A LITTLE MAN WHO
 WAS TAKEN BY A BEE.

CHAPTER III.

TOM heard his father say that the Arabs mount upon the back of the ostrich, and move over the ground quicker than a horse can gallop. Tom was amused with this story, "Why may not I," said he to himself, "get upon the back of a hen, and fly away like the wind;" the idea pleased him, and he resolved to put it into practice.

He left the house, and went to the place where the fowls were kept, but how was he to catch one of them. He rushed into the midst of

them, running now one way, and then another; but though he plucked a feather from one, touched another, and fell at the foot of a third, not one of them could he catch. The noise and confusion called out his mother; he instantly desisted, and stood panting, casting his eyes after the fowls. She gave him strict orders never to meddle with the fowls, and returned into the house. Now observe Tom's conduct. He disobeyed his mother, and disobedience is always attended with repentance.

“How shall I catch one of those fowls,” said he, after his mother had left him: he was an ingenious boy, and he soon resolved upon a plan; he

went away, and filling his pockets with corn, he returned, and lay down upon a stone, scattering the corn around him. An old hen came up and walked round him, but she was too cautious to approach; a grown chicken next advanced, it had less caution, and immediately it began to pick up the corn. Tom watched an opportunity, and clasping his



arms around its neck, he leaped upon its back: away it flew, the other fowls were frightened, and then what a cackling, and noise, and confusion. Tom kept his seat amid all the uproar, till the chicken ran against the breast of a turkey, and in the shock he fell to the ground. The enraged turkey pursued him; he fled with terror, for it could have vanquished a dozen of such mighty men. Terror gave him strength to run, he made for a cabbage which lay before him, and took shelter under it, cowering at its root. The turkey which still pursued, came up and looked round, but its neck overtopped the head of

the cabbage, which served as an umbrella to cover the little man. Tom drew his sword, but he saw the danger of engaging with such an animal, and prudently desisted from the attack. The turkey stalked away, and Tom by means of a berry bush climbed upon the top of the cabbage. He cast his eyes



around him, and saw his enemy at no great distance, but he had the good fortune at the same time to see Tray, his favourite dog. Instantly his hat was whipt off, and he waved it, calling upon Tray: the dog heard and approached him; Tom slid down upon the good natured animal's back, and thus se-



cure from his enemy, he rode home.

Tom's mother chided him severely, and told him that disobedience to parents was often attended with danger. Tom some time afterwards wished to have another ride upon a hen. This was very wrong, and you will see how he was punished. There was a small hole in a wall through which the fowls frequently passed. Tom went, and placed himself in such a manner above it, that the moment one of them popped through its head, he could drop upon its back. He had not remained long before he heard one approaching; he trembled in ex-

pectation. A duck popped through its head ; he seized it round the neck, and courageously placed himself upon its back. The duck, displeased with such a load, waddled away, and to the great terror of the little man plunged into a pool.



At this moment his mother came

out of the house, and seeing his danger, ran to the brink of the pool, and stretching out her hands repeatedly, cried, "My son Tom will be drowned." Tray, who had followed her, stood by her side barking, while the terrified ducks plunged about, in confusion and terror. Tom grew giddy, and slipped off the duck's back; he was on the point of being drowned. His mother pointed to him, and called out to Tray. The dog plunged into the water, caught him by the coat, and dragged him, almost dead, to the brink. From this time the little man never attempted to molest the fowls. Tenderness to animals is the first quality of a child.

A boy who takes pleasure in tormenting a hen, or even a fly, will not, in future life, possess real humanity.

CHAPTER IV.

TOM, when in the fields, saw a lamb playing upon the grass. It did not seem to regard his little figure. He went near it, and while he was putting his hand upon its back, it started, and almost threw him down. Tom was displeased, because it paid him so little respect, and he ran to a willow, and plucked a twig in order to beat it. The twig was a large one, about the size of a goose's feather. All this was very wrong; he had no business to meddle with the lamb, and it was

cruel in him to resolve to beat it. He again advanced, and began to beat it upon the sides; the pretty little animal did not regard him. It skipped about, and coming against him with its shoulder, it overturned him, and broke his large twig. The mighty man rose in anger, drew his sword, and attacked the lamb. It leaped about, and seemed to mock all his attempts to hurt it. Tom watched an opportunity, and when it was near him, he made a violent push at his side. The sword stuck in its wool, and the animal scampered away, leaving him gazing after it, and lamenting his folly. At this moment an eagle, that was hovering



in the air, pounced down upon the lamb, and bore it away in its talons. Tom who witnessed this, and who was angry with the little animal, seemed to rejoice in its fate. This shewed a very bad disposition. To rejoice at another's misfortune is very wicked, you will see how he was punished.

The lamb struggled hard, and before it had ascended far, it disengaged itself from the eagle, and fell down upon the ground. It started up, and as it was not much hurt, it ran away to its dam. The eagle resolved not to lose its prey, it looked down; the little animal and its dam lay behind a thorn; and it saw only Tom Thumb. It darted downward, he saw its approach, and threw himself down, with his face flat upon the ground, nothing could save him, it seized him by the coat, and away it flew to its nest.

The eagle had two young ones; and when Tom arrived at its nest, he expected to be devoured. He was laid

down; the eaglets stretched out their necks; how was he to save himself?



he crept beneath one of the young ones, and grasping its legs, he lay concealed from view. The eagle seeing him not, and supposing him to be eaten up, flew away for more food. "Poor 'Tom Thumb,'" said he

to himself, "I shall never again see my friends: here I must die."

When the eagle was gone, Tom cast his eyes round him, and saw a chink or hole in the rock, on which the nest was built. He went into it, stopped up the entrance with sticks torn from the nest, leaving only a small opening for himself. "This," said he, "shall be my little house." He had scarcely finished his work, when he heard the eagle returning. He crept into the hole, and lay securely till his enemy went away.

Tom ventured from his lurking place; the eagle this time brought a loaf of bread, which a labourer had

carried into the field, and laid aside for his dinner. This was a welcome sight to poor Tom, who was hungry. No sooner did the eagle leave him, than he began to cut a slice from



the loaf with his sword, which had dropped from the lamb.

While he was thus employed, a

shadow passed over him; he was terrified, for he thought that it was the eagle returned. In this he was fortunately deceived. It was a peasant who had ascended in order to take away the young ones. 'Tom gave a shout of joy; the peasant was frightened, and began to descend. The little man called him back; he returned, and putting Tom in his pocket, carried him in safety home.

CHAPTER V.

TOM was one day carried abroad into the fields by his companions. They all had fishing rods, and when they came to a stream, they sat down and prepared to angle. Before they began, an accident had almost spoiled their amusement. A boy who was thirsty, went down to the stream, and brought up water in his hat. When he had done drinking, he carelessly threw down the water, which rolled in a full current towards the little man, and swept him away. A boy who saw

his danger rushed forward, seized him by the coat, and saved his life. This heedless action was very blameable; for every boy should acquire the habit of looking to the consequences of his actions.

After they had angled for some time, Tom hooked a trout. It was too strong for him, and he would have been dragged into the stream, had he not thought of an expedient. He laid down behind a stone, drawing the fishing rod round it, and there he lay till the trout was weary, when he pulled it to the bank. It was a very large one, about the size of a man's finger. Tom lifted it upon his shoulder,



and bore it in triumph towards his companions.

On his way a breeze arose, its violence made him totter; the trout fell one way and himself another. He got up, but the breeze was too strong for him, and he buried himself in the grass, taking

hold of it with his hands. His companions soon missed him; they saw his fishing rod, and were alarmed. They went about crying "Tom Thumb," at last one of them found him out as he lay buried in the grass.

In a bush on the back of the stream the boys found a nest with four eggs. "It would be cruel," said they, "to take away these eggs," and they resolved not to touch them. Tom, however, was of a different opinion, and he wished to have them. For this purpose he remained behind his companions.

Tom's conduct was very blameable. He dissembled with his companions, and dissimulation is always odious.

Besides, it was very wrong to desire to take away the eggs from a poor little bird.

When the boys were gone to some distance, Tom advanced to the bush, but how was he to ascend? he contrived a method: most of the boys had their kites, and among the rest, Tom had his tied on his back. He unloosed it, and imme-



diately set it up, directing it over the bush. Then he lowered it on the other side, so that the packthread passed over the nest.

The little man then took hold of the pack-thread with his hands, and climbed up to the nest. The poor little bird was perched on a branch chirping mournfully, but he did not regard it. Unfeeling boy. It seemed to cry, "Cruel Tom Thumb," but he nothing regarded. He took out an egg, but how was he to descend with it. As it was too large for his pocket, he put it in his fishing bag, and flinging it over his shoulder he regained the ground.

Tom again ascended, but when

he had almost reached the nest, a rat came to the foot of the bush



and attempted to make itself master of the egg. The egg was in his hat, which the animal took by the rim with his teeth, and dragged into its lurking place. Tom saw the robbery from the top of the bush

and bawled out, but the rat disregarded him. The mighty little man seized his sword in a passion, and began to descend in order to chastise the pilferer. He was in such a hurry that the thread broke and down he fell to the ground. The rat got away with its prize. Tom lost his hat, the kite was hanging out of his reach on the bush, and thus he was punished for his conduct.

His companions soon joined him, and, when they saw what he had been doing, they were displeased. He told them how he had lost his kite, and his hat. "Lost your hat," cried one of the boys, "I will give

you a hat," saying this he whipt his own upon the great little man, and completely covered him. Then a roguish boy took up a few stones, and put them upon its rim in order to keep it down. There Tom was completely imprisoned. "Now we will leave him," they all cried, and went away laughing and talking. When they had gone a certain length, they returned upon tiptoe, and lay down beside the hat, without making the least whisper, listening to hear how he was employed.

How was Tom to get out? His invention did not desert him, with his sword he made a small hole to admit the light. He then began to

make a folding door in the side of the hat. This cost him much labour, and when it was finished he pushed it outward. The boys were greatly surprised, but they were still more so when they beheld the mighty little man marching out with a stately



air. They all laughed heartily, and

the boy to whom the hat belonged, as it was an old one, forgave the trick. They pulled down his kite, and carried him home with the loss of his hat,

CHAPTER VI.

TOM's mother, one beautiful summer's day, carried him abroad, and sat down with him upon the brow of a hill. He strayed a few yards from her, and went to a broom, where he perceived a hare sitting. The animal was not alarmed; Tom supposed it a dog, and climbing up the bush, he dropped down upon its back. The hare started up and sprung away; Tom took hold of it by the ears, and in a few seconds they were out of sight.



Tom's mother in the greatest affliction hastened home, and told her husband of the melancholy event. The father was distracted for the loss of his son, and instantly set out in quest of him. He pursued the course that the hare had taken.

In the mean time Tom kept his seat, and scudded over the hills and

plains on his affrighted charger. He passed within a small distance of two men who were mowing a meadow. "See," cried one of them to the



other, "there a man riding upon a hare." They both looked and were amazed. They had never heard of the mighty little man, and one said to the other with an air of sagacity,

“It is to be sure a man, but a man is ten times larger than a hare, and cannot ride upon one; therefore the animal that he rides upon is a horse.”

“But did they not,” replied the other, “pass within a few yards of us?” “In that supposition we are deceived,” answered the reasoner, “for had they done so, they would have appeared ten times bigger; something has deceived us.” Thus the two honest men disbelieved their senses, and supposed that Tom and the hare were a man and a horse.

An old woman who sat reading in front of a cottage happened to cast her eye off the book, as Tom and the hare were passing, she was



extrémely surprised, she could not indeed credit her senses, and taking off her spectacles, deliberately wiped them, and again applied them to her nose, she looked along the road, but she saw nothing, for the hare and Tom would not wait her leisure. “It has all been

a deception," said she, "what I took for a hare and a man have been nothing more than two flies running over my spectacles."

As they passed a farm house a number of dogs pursued them, and the hare making a great spring, threw its rider upon the ground, and easily escaped.

Tom overcome with fatigue, laid himself down at the foot of a decayed thorn. He had not remained long in this place, before he perceived a weasel gliding toward him. The courageous little man rose, and prepared to receive the enemy on the point of his sword. The foe approached, it stood still for a few

seconds, then springing forward it attacked the little man. He defended himself bravely; it rushed upon him, the combat was fierce. Tom with a dreadful blow struck



off one of its ears, but in return it bit one of his fingers. He then in-

flicted upon it, a severe wound in the shoulder—a wound which laid open the skin for a quarter of an inch. But the little man was also doomed to suffer, for the enraged animal seized him by the arm, and its teeth penetrated his flesh. Tom retreated, and climbed up the huge fragment of a rock eighteen inches high, his enemy still following him. He looked down, the animal made an attempt to descend. Tom took up a stone, threw it, and the weasel turned round and ran away.

Tom came down from the rock, and clambered up the thorn in order to look round him. The thorn was

decayed, and hollow in the middle. This circumstance he did not observe, and the moment he ascended, he plumped into the hole. Poor little



man! there he found himself completely confined, unable to see any thing but the sky. He tried to get

out, but all his efforts were in vain. Grief overwhelmed him, and he lamented his situation; but grief could not rescue him. A boy should not grieve, but act. Tom considered how he was to extricate himself; he took out his sword and began to bore through the thorn. This he accomplished, though it cost him much labour, and he rejoiced again to behold the fields.

The labour had fatigued him, and he took a little time to rest. In the mean time a peasant came up to the thorn, and began to cut it down for fuel. Tom looked out, and was greatly alarmed at his danger, what



was to be done? He thrust out his sword and called upon the man to help him. The peasant started; the sword and language terrified him; he threw down his axe, and ran away. Tom was left in his unhappy situation, and he almost despaired of regaining his liberty.

Tom's father had traced out the course of the hare, and at this time he was near the thorn where his son was confined. Tom saw him, and called him by name, but, not hearing him, he passed by. Great was the anguish of poor Tom Thumb; "Now," said he, "I am left to perish." Tray however, that was scampering about, fortunately advanced to the thorn, and after smelling round it, lifted up his paws. Tom looked up and saw the foot of a dog, he took hold of it, and raised himself up from his prison. How great was his joy, to behold his faithful Tray; the dog fawned upon him, Tom got upon his back, and rode in triumph

to his father. The meeting was most tender, and when they arrived at home, his mother went for joy.

CHAPTER VII.

TOM was once sent by his mother to a great distance from home; the distance was no less than a quarter of a mile, and on his return he met with many adventures. He received a penny-piece and a bit of sugar cake from the people to whom he was sent. The penny-piece he carried on his shoulder, and the sugar cake he put into his pocket.

On the road he sat down, and taking the sugar cake out of his

pocket, he laid it down beside him, and began to amuse himself. This was very wrong, for when a boy is going to school, or upon any message, he should not saunter by the way. You will observe what happened. While he was playing, a crow, which was flying over his



head, saw the sugar cake, and darting downward bore it away.

After this, Tom saw a servant girl coming along a foot-path with a pail of milk on her head. Tom at times loved a mischievous trick, he crept behind a tuft of grass, and when the girl was opposite to him, he sprang forward, and hal-



loosed ; she started, and the pail fell from her head. What a mischievous boy ! But observe how he was punished ; whoever does wrong, always suffers in some manner. The pail fell at his foot, and the milk swept him away ; the girl who saw his danger, hastened to his assistance, and lifted him out of the white current. Tom was very sorry for his fault. A child who delights in mischievous tricks will most likely become a vulgar or cruel man.

Tom next came to some men who were cutting down a tree, and he stood for some time observing them. The tree fell, and the men

having finished their work departed. It fell across the road, and obstructed Tom's passage; how was he to get over it? He piled up stones, and having mounted them, he swung down on the other side of the tree by means of a branch; but in mounting up he lost his shoe. He sat down and lamented his loss; a boy came up to him; Tom requested him to search for his shoe, but the ill-natured boy refused; "if you will give me my shoe," said the little man, with an air of importance, "I will show you something." The boy supposed that he meant something remarkable;

the shoe was instantly brought over, Tom received it, "now," said he, "I will show you something," and deliberately put it on.

Tom arrived at a place where a few boys were playing at marbles; he stood for some time viewing them, he then began to whirl his penny, but whilst he was rolling it along, it plumped into a small puddle and disappeared; Tom stood piteously looking after it. What was he to do? He would have drowned himself had he attempted to find it; a marble belonging to one of the boys who were at play rolled towards him, he took it, and unseen threw

it into the small collection of water. The boy came running, crying, "where is my marble?" "It fell in there," said Tom, pointing to the water; the boy bared his arm, and plunging it downward, brought up the penny; "that is mine," cried Tom, and instantly received it. The boy then brought up his own marble, and rejoined his companions, while the little man moved homeward, laughing at the success of his trick.

Tom's next adventure was in one respect blameable, and in another commendable. It is cruel to insult a poor man! if you cannot relieve

him, you should at least pity him. A poor old man, whom age had rendered almost blind, was walking slowly along the road with a staff in his hand; Tom in order to surprise him, cried, "Look to that serpent at your feet." The old man startled, and looking down, saw there was no serpent, but he cried out, "O, I see what it is," and with his staff, he made the mire upon the road splash about the little man, who took to his heels. When Tom committed a fault he was always sorry for it; — this is the character of a good boy. After walking a little way, he met a

beggar-boy. "Is that man," said Tom, "any friend to you?" "He is my grandfather," replied the boy. "Then," said Tom, "I have done wrong, and I desire you will carry him this penny, and say that I ask



his pardon; for it is very wicked to insult age and poverty." The boy

received the penny, and did what he was desired. The old man, who was highly pleased, turned round, took off his hat, and made Tom a bow. The little man felt the satisfaction which arises from doing a good action, and continued his journey homeward.

When he arrived at home, Tray came out and fawned upon him, or rather leaped round him and over him. Tom had a parrot, which he had taught to say, "Poor Tom Thumb," but it was rather untractable, and the little man frequently losing his temper, used to abuse it, by crying, "Ah you fool," or "the fool!" The parrot at length

came to connect these two sentences together. It is very wrong in children to use abusive names even to an animal. Tom found this to be a truth; for he no sooner entered the house, than the parrot springing up to the top of its cage, repeatedly cried; "Poor Tom Thumb the fool—Poor Tom Thumb the fool." His mother blamed him for some of his tricks, excused him for others, but she praised him for the amends which he made to the old man.

The sun disappeared behind a mountain; the cattle that were on the meadows, sunk down upon the grass; the birds that had so charmingly sung, were returning to their

nests.; and Margery Meanwell con-
 cluded the Adventures of the New
 Tom Thumb. The village children
 went home; Margery lifted her
 spinning wheel; and, followed by her
 grandson and her cat, went into her
 cottage, while the young gentlemen
 took the road to the Academy.

THE END.

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